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Thomas P. Gaffey, Co-Chair
Andrew M. Fleishmann, Co-Chair
Education Committee
Room 3100, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Regarding: **Raised Bill # 6666, Section 7**
An act requiring School Districts to utilized Board Certified Behavior Analysts when an individual education plan includes applied behavior analytic services as part of a student's special education

Madam Chair, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

Our names are Svetlana and Raymond Brien. We currently reside in Norwalk, CT. We are also parents of a child with autism. We are in **STRONG** support of Raised Bill # 6666, Section 7.

We wholeheartedly support – and we urge the committee to expand the summary of the proposed bill #6666, Sec. 7 such that all children diagnosed with autism receive the benefit of a BCBA, and not only for those children when a PPT determines that the student should receive behavior analysis services. What follows is a summary of our observations and reasons for supporting a bill that requires adequate certification for specialists who work with special needs children:

- working with certified people provides the right interpretations and approach early on, and wastes less valuable time (especially the child's time);
 - working with certified people wastes less financial resources;
 - working with certified people moves the child more quickly *away from* isolation and danger, and more quickly *toward* inclusion and safety
1. **Working with certified people provides the right interpretations and the right approach early on, and wastes less valuable time:** It is easier now to spot someone who has inadequate training or no training at all. The first “special education teacher” assigned by the school district to our son Daniel was not familiar with sensory issues, since she described him as an “exhibitionist” when he would take off his clothes. We then switched to Spectrum Kids (Stacy Lore’s firm), who worked with Daniel for about 21 months (January 2007-September 2008). While Stacy Lore claimed that Daniel mastered a “long list of skills” during this time, an independent evaluation performed by the McCarton Center in NYC in September 2008 showed otherwise: he was not able to provide a

signature that in any way resembled the one Stacy elicited from him; he could not generalize those skills, or has even lost some of them as compared to the McCarton Center evaluation report from 2006. This was a critical loss for Daniel, and could have been entirely prevented had Stacy Lore been properly vetted.

2. **Working with certified people wastes less financial resources:** We are going to do everything we can to ensure that Daniel get the treatment he really needs. The sooner Daniel gets qualified help, the sooner he will recover, and the less expensive the whole process is for any concerned. Conversely the lack of qualified help at critical moments may sentence both the individual and the state to a lifelong process of recovery and crippling financial loss for individuals and families.
3. **Working with certified people moves the child away from isolation and danger, and more quickly toward inclusion and safety:** A couple of examples: 1) Ms. Lore promised that Daniel would master certain social skills, including staying with us in public situations, but toward the end of her care we had an incident where Daniel ran away and was nearly run over in a library parking lot by someone backing into a parking space (we filed a police report). 2) Because other children don't necessarily understand Daniel, and because he currently has no qualified help assigned to him, he still feels isolated, and often receives insults and labeling from his peers. We're confident that with qualified specialists he can master the skills and gain the necessary confidence to engage with his peers in friendly relations.

Based on all of the above, we **URGE** you to protect the health and well being of Connecticut children with special needs.

Please PASS Section 7 of Bill 6666.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Svetlana and Raymond Brien